Single Party Majority Government in India Since 1984

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ABSTRACT

First general elections were held in India between 25 October, 1951 and 21 February, 1952. They were the first elections to the Lok Sabha after independence in August 1947. It was conducted under the provisions of the Indian constitution, which was adopted on 26 November 1949. Elections to most of the state legislatures took place simultaneously. Unlike most countries the elections are conducted by an independent constitutional body the election commission of India. The election commission of India has had conducted successfully 16 general elections to the Lok Sabha so far. The number of eligible voters went up from 17.3 crore in 1951 to 83.40 crores in 2014, While only 53 political parties contested the first Lok Sabha election in 1951, 465 political parties contested in 2014. A lot of numbers related to elections have also changed, from voter turn out to polling booths to contesting political parties. In the first ever general election to the Lok Sabha in 1951, there were only 17.3 crore registered voters and the voter turnout was 45.7% the lower ever turnout till date. The voter turnout slightly improved, in 2009 while in the highest ever voter turnout in the India's Lok Sabha election history was in the 2014 elections.

KEY WORDS: *Turnout, Indian National Congress, Baratiya Janta Party, Regional Parties.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In an era of coalition politics, BJP has virtually done impossible by winning majority on its own, putting India under single party rule after 1984 general elections. The scale and significance of BJP's victory could be gauged from the fact that since 1989, no single party could form government on its own. The last 25 years were marked by various types of coalition governments (Third front, United front, Minority government, National Democratic alliance, United Progressive alliance) led by congress, BJP, third front and a minority government, while emerging as the party with a majority of its own, the BJP has also managed to increase its vote share 32.3% of the total votes polled in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Its victory march has been so impressive that it has put its way over the entire states of Gujarat, Uttrakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Delhi. BJP vote share in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections was 18.80 percent of the total votes polled[1]. It was in 1984, that congress managed a majority of its own in the Lok Sabha. The elections that year were held in the aftermath of the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

Record 66.3% voters turned up at the polling booths in 2014. In the 1951 election, a total of 53 political parties contested and in 2009, 363 political parties contested elections while this number went up to 465 in 2014. India had its first general election in 1951 which was won by Indian National Congress, a political party that went on to dominate subsequent election until 1977, when a non-congress government was formed, for the first time in independent India. The 1990s saw the end of single party domination and the rise of coalition governments. The elections for 16th Lok Sabha 2014, once again brought back single party rule in the country, with the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) being able to claim a majority in the Lok Sabha. The new one-party dominant system is however dramatically different from the original one. The BJP unlike the congress is a cadre based party and subscribes to a distinct ideology. It is also headed by the powerful figure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose image looms larger than the party and his colleagues. India will witness a qualitatively different style of governance in the next five years.

General elections were held in India in nine phases from 7th April to 12th May 2014 to elect the members of the 16th Lok Sabha with 834 million registered voters, the average election turnout over all nine phases was around 66.40%, the highest ever in the history of India's general elections. The result was declared on 16th May, 15 days before the 15th Lok Sabha completed its constitutional mandate on 31st may 2014. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) received 32.3 % of the vote and won 282 seats, while its National Democratic Alliance won a total of 336 seats. The BJP's vote share was the lowest by a party winning a majority of seats since independence. However, the governing coalition had the largest majority since the 1984 elections, and it was the first time since 1984 that a party had won enough seats to govern without the support of other parties[2].

In contrast, the result was the worst ever performance by the Indian National Congress (INS) which had resulted India for most of its post-independence history. The INC received 19.3 percent of the vote and won

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only 44 seats, with its wider alliance, the United Progressive Alliance, winning a total of just 59 seats[3]. In order to become the official opposition party in India, a party must have 55 seats; as a result there was no official opposition party since 1984. The country's economic indicators were performing well in advance of the result in expectation of a BJP win, on the perception that Modi is business-friendly. The benchmark BSE Sensex and CNX Nifty indices hit record highs and the Indian rupee strengthened 11 month high of 58.62 against the US dollar and closed at 58.79. Analysts suggested a high turnout would favour the BJP as it indicates an increase in participation of urban votes who are the party's traditional vote bank. Others have suggested however, that this could indicate an increase in voting amongst the 150 million Muslim that generally support the INC but Modi has managed to make some connection with votes and the congress is doing pretty badly[4].

When it became clear that the BJP would win the election, Modi tweeted, India has won, Ache din Anne wale hai. This tweet instantly became India's most re-tweeted twitter post, and Manmohan Singh congratulated Modi by telephone. Congress president and UPA chairperson congratulated the next government; take full responsibility for the loss of congress, well before 16th Lok Sabha elections, Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi was chosen to lead the Bharatiya Janta Party's campaign after a party conclave in Goa. This came amid controversy as L.K. Advani opposed the decision and resigned from his party posts, only to later rescind his resignation. A 12 members committee, led by Modi, was appointed at the Goa conclave which included M.Venkaiah Naidu, Nitin Gadkari, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Raman Singh, and Manohar Parrikar[5]. Modi contested the election from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Vadodara in Gujarat. The BJP released its manifesto on 7th April 2014. The party promised to setup a price stabilization and to evolve a single 'National Agriculture Market' to check price rise and go for e-governance, policy-driven governance and simplification of the tax regime to prevent corruption, encourage labour-intensive manufacturing, the upgrade of infrastructure and housing and self-employment opportunities for job creation and promise to give one rank one pensions scheme to ex-servicemen's. The INC dismissed the opinion polls pointing to a NDA plurality as misleading and partisan[6]. In its manifesto the party promised inclusive growth and that it would initiate a draft of welfare schemes, including a right to healthcare for all the pensions for the aged and disabled[7].

During the election, former Prime Ministerial aide Sanjaya Baru published "The accidental Prime Minister: The making and unmaking of Manmohan Singh in which he criticised Singh as not being fully in charge of his government in having to compete with the dynastic INC leader, Sonia Gandhi, for influence within his own cabinet. UPA alliance partners were INC, Rashtriya Janata Dal, NCP, RLD, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, National Conference, Indian Muslim League, Socialist Janata Dal, Kerala Congress, RSP, Bodoland People's Front, Communist Party of India. After the competetion of the polling the opinion polls generally showed the national Democratic Alliance (NDA) to be the front runner in the election with the emergence of BJP as the single largest party[8].

EXIT POLLS

Publishing Date	Polling Organization	NDA	UPA	Other
April	CNN-IBN-Lokniti CSDS	211-231	107-127	205
April	ABP News-Nielsen	236	92	215
April	NDTV-Hansa Research	230	128	185
April	NDTV-Hansa Research	275	111	157
12 May 2014	CNN-IBN CSDS	276 ±6	95 ±5	148 ±23
	India Today Cicero	272 ±11	115	156 ±6
		283		
12 May 2014	News 24-Chanakys	340 ±14	70 ±9	133 ±11
	Time Now-ORG	249	148	146
	ABP News Nillson	274	97	165
	India TV-C voter	289	101	148
14 May 2014	NDTV Hansa Reserch	279	103	161
12 May 2014	Poll of Polls	283	105	149
16 May 2014	Actual Results	336	58	149

The election commission of India banned the publication of all exit polls starting 48 hours before phase 1 of the election until the end of phase 9. This was intended to prevent exit polls from earlier phases affecting voter decisions in later phases. The ban ended after the close of phase 9 voting at 6:30PM IST on 12 May 2014.

Results of the 2014 Indian general election and List of members of the 16th Lok Sabha

Party	Votes	Percentage	Seats
Bharatiya Janata Party	17,16,60,230	31	282
Indian National Congress	10,69,35,942	19.31	44
Bahujan Samaj Party	2,29,46,346	4.14	0

All India Trinamool Congress	2,12,62,665	3.84	34
Samajwadi Party	1,86,73,089	3.37	5
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	1,81,11,579	3.27	37
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	1,79,88,955	3.25	9
Telugu Desam Party	1,40,99,230	2.55	16
YSR Congress Party	1,39,95,435	2.53	9
Aam Aadmi Party	1,13,25,387	2.05	4
Shiv Sena	1,02,62,544	1.85	18
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	96,31,246	1.74	0
Biju Janata Dal	94,89,946	1.71	20
Nationalist Congress Party	86,35,558	1.56	6
Rashtriya Janata Dal	74,40,937	1.34	4
Telangana Rashtra Samithi	67,36,270	1.22	11
Janata Dal (United)	59,92,281	1.08	2
Communist Party of India	43,27,460	0.78	1
Janata Dal (Secular)	37,31,481	0.67	2
Shiromani Akali Dal	36,36,148	0.66	4
Indian National Lok Dal	27,99,899	0.51	2
All India United Democratic Front	23,33,040	0.42	3
Lok Jan Shakti Party	22,95,929	0.41	6
Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam	20,78,843	0.38	0
Pattali Makkal Katchi	18,27,566	0.33	1
Revolutionary Socialist Party	16,66,380	0.3	1
Jharkhand Mukti Morcha	16,37,994	0.3	2
Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajatantrik)	15,79,772	0.29	0
Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	14,17,535	0.26	0
All India Forward Bloc	12,11,418	0.22	0
Swabhimani Paksha	11,05,073	0.2	1
Indian Union Muslim League	11,00,096	0.2	2
Rashtriya Lok Samta Party	10,78,473	0.19	3
Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist)	10,07,275	0.18	0
Naga People's Front	9,94,505	0.18	1
Apna Dal	8,21,820	0.15	2
Bahujan Mukti Party	7,91,951	0.14	0
Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party	7,32,644	0.13	3
Maharashtra Navnirman Sena	7,08,010	0.13	0
Haryana Janhit Congress (BL)	7,03,698	0.13	0
Rashtriya Lok Dal	6,96,918	0.13	0
All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen	6,85,730	0.12	1
Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi	6,06,110	0.11	0
Asom Gana Parishad	5,77,730	0.1	0
National Peoples Party	5,76,448	0.1	1
Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist)	5,20,972	0.09	0
Peace Party	5,18,724	0.09	0
Peasants and Workers Party of India	4,97,721	0.09	0
All Jharkhand Students Union	4,88,719	0.09	0
Rashtriya Samaj Paksha	4,58,580	0.08	0
Kerala Congress (M)	4,24,194	0.08	1

Jammu & Kashmir National Conference	3,96,713	0.07	0
Social Democratic Party of India	3,96,524	0.07	0
Bharipa Bahujan Mahasangh	3,60,854	0.07	0
Quami Ekta Dal	3,54,577	0.06	0
Bodoland People's Front	3,30,106	0.06	0
Socialist Janata (Democratic)	3,07,597	0.06	0
Gondwana Ganatantra Party	3,01,366	0.05	0
Bahujan Vikas Aaghadi	2,93,681	0.05	0
Puthiya Tamilagam	2,62,812	0.05	0
All India N.R. Congress	2,55,826	0.05	1
Manithaneya Makkal Katchi	2,36,679	0.04	0
Welfare Party of India	2,28,645	0.04	0
Jai Bharat Samanta Party	2,15,607	0.04	0
Republican Party of India (Athawale)	2,06,689	0.04	0
Jai Samaikyandhra Party	2,04,260	0.04	0
Jharkhand Party	2,03,869	0.04	0
Pyramid Party of India	1,85,478	0.03	0
Ambedkarite Party of India	1,85,095	0.03	0
Lok Satta Party	1,65,670	0.03	0
Sikkim Democratic Front	1,63,698	0.03	1
Aama Odisha Party	1,55,900	0.03	0
National Unionist Zamindara Party	1,24,990	0.02	0
Sikkim Krantikari Morcha	1,21,956	0.02	0
Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party	1,18,947	0.02	0
Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist)	1,14,323	0.02	0
Marxist Co-ordination Committee	1,10,185	0.02	0
Jharkhand Disom Party	1,09,843	0.02	0
United Democratic Party	1,06,817	0.02	0
385 other parties with fewer than 100,000 votes	40,17,081	0.73	0
Independents	1,67,37,720	3.02	3
None of the above	60,02,942	1.08	–
Nominated Anglo-Indians			2
Total	**55,38,02,946**	**100**	**545**
Valid Votes	55,38,02,946	99.93	
Invalid/blank votes	3,68,873	0.07	
Total Votes	**55,41,71,819**	**100**	
Registered voters/turnout	83,40,82,814	66.44	

Source: Election Commission of India.

Regional wise Bharatiya Janata Party and others performance in 2014 election

Region	Total Seats	BJP	INC	Others
South India	130	22[+2]	19[-42]	90[+40]
West India	78	53[+26]	2[-27]	23[+1]
North India	225	190[+127]	8[-71]	27[-56]
North East India	25	8[+4]	8[-5]	9[+1]
East India	63	3[+2]	4[-8]	56[-5]
Union Territories	22	6[+5]	3[-9]	0
Total	543	282[+166]	44[-162]	205[+9]

Source: Times of India

EMERGING TRENDS IN INDIAN ELECTORAL POLITICS AND PARTY SYSTEM

The paradox of Indian democracy is that enlightened middle class has shown indifferent attitude towards electoral process. In the era of globalization, he is so deeply involved to fulfil his unending quench for attaining material pleasure that he fails to realise his larger national responsibility. This raises the question that when the most educated and enlightened group will fail to fulfil their national obligation then how can we expect our political system to improve automatically[9]. In western democracy, highly educated and successful groups not only take part in electoral process but also put pressure on government through various pressure groups and also by forming civil society groups on a large scale, whereas in India, people belonging to middle and upper class maintain indifferent attitude and people belonging to lower social, economic, educational back ground register their participation in large number. For the success of democracy, the participation of have and have not is equally required. In Indian competitive party system, political party's gains power through competitive electoral battle. In orders to win election, political parties; indulge in all sorts of manaeverality like arousing passion in the name of caste, region, religion etc. In fact political parties have compromised with ideology in order to gain power[10]. Over the years, one finds a marked change in the way party system operates in India, after 1989. The party system moving from a one-party dominance system to a multi-party competition, from social cohesion to fragmentation, from a stable pattern to fluidity, from order to chaos as the principle of party competition, and one party dominance has been replaced by coalition government till 2014. This period has led to the emergence of regional and mushrooming parties centres of power. Regional political parties had played very crucial role in the national politics, but 16th Lok Sabha elections in 2014 has returned with single party dominance in centre stage and take the place of Indian National Congress.

Under Modi-Shah leadership, the party was turned into a mass-based party from a cadre-driven one. The BJP launched its membership drive asking citizens interested in joining the party to give a missed call on a dedicated phone number; they were then registered as members and their person al and professional details were taken by 2014. The BJP had become the biggest political party in country and the world, surpassing the communist party of China in membership when it crossed 8.8 crore mark. Soon the membership breached the 10 crore mark[11]. The BJP also began to penetrate into the rural countryside, focusing on reaching the backward classes and the poor. The party paid attention to caste-sub-castes and social groups that have been neglected by other parties. The BJP also reaped dividends from the sustained work of RSS-backed organization in remote tribal area and Adivashi over several decades.

BJP AS CENTRE STAGE

The Bharatiya Janta Party was officially founded in 6th April 1980, and the first general election it contested was in 1984, in which it won only two Lok Sabha seats. Following the election in 1996, the BJP became the largest party in the Lok Sabha for the first time, but the government it formed was short-lived[12]. After the 1998 general election, the BJP-led coalition known as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) under the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee formed a government that lasted for a year. Following fresh elections, the NDA government, again headed by Vajpayee, lasted a full term in office; this was the first non-congress government to do so. In the 2004 general election, the NDA suffered an unexpected defeat, and for the next ten years the BJP was the principal opposition party in the Lok Sabha. Long-time Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi led it to a landslide victory in the 2014 general elections**.** From 1991 onwards, a BJP member has led the opposition whenever the party was not in power. The official ideology of the BJP is integral humanism, first formulated by Deendayal Upadhaya in 1965[13]. The party expresses a commitment to Hindutva, and its policy has historically reflected Hindu nationalist positions. The BJP advocates social conservatism and a foreign policy centred on nationalist principles. Its key issues have included the abrogation of the article 370, the building of a Ram Temple at Ayodhya and the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code.

BJP'S WINNING STRATEGIES

The BJP has been able to expand its political base in the country because of various factors including superior electoral strategies, planning[14], hard work, and a voter outreach programme that was far better than those of its rivals. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, the party devised electoral strategies taking into account micro details of caste, sub-castes, religious compositions and other specifics of its constituencies while selecting party candidates. Under them, electoral victory at any cost became the driving forces of the BJP. Part of the strategy was to carefully identify ambitious or dissident leaders from rival parties. Those were then wooed and inducted into the party. This had begun in the run-up to the 2014 general elections when a host of congress leaders like former UP Chief Minister Jagdamika Pal, Satpal Maharaj and Purandeshwari were admitted into the BJP. Many others like Choudhary Birendra Singh joined the ruling party later. A congress leader and prominent minister in the former chief minister Tarun Gogoi's cabinet in Assam, Himanta Biswa Sharma, was admitted a year before the assembly elections and proved critical in the BJP's win. In Uttrakhand, many congress leaders, including ministers, were admitted to the party before the

respective assembly elections. Another strategy was to identify castes and sub-castes which have not been part of the power structure and give tickets to their members. The party also reached out to the economically weaker and socially backward groups. In UP, the party roped in the non-Yadav castes from other backward castes and Jatav Dalits among the Dalit's; it would reap rich electoral dividends[15].

ELECTION RESULTS OF BJP AND CONGRESS SINCE 1984 TO 2014

Election Year	Party	Votes	Percentage	Seats
1984	Indian National Congress	115,478,267	49.10	404
	Bharatiya Janta Party	18,202,853	7.74	2
1989	Indian National Congress	188,894,702	39.53	197
	BJP	34,171,477	11.36	85
1991	Congress	99799403	36.26	232
	BJP	55345075	20.11	120
1996	Congress	96455493	28.80	140
	BJP	67950851	20.29	161
1998	Congress	95111131	25.82	141
	BJP	94266188	25.59	182
1999	Congress	103120330	28.30	182
	BJP	86562209	23.75	114
2004	Congress	103408949	28.30	145
	BJP	86371561	23.75	138
2009	Congress	199111019	28.55	206
	BJP	78435381	18.80	116
2014	Congress	106935942	19.31	44
	BJP	171,660,230	31.00	282

Source: Election Commission of India

The Bharatiya Janta Party BJP is celebrating its 34th foundation day in 2014. In 1984, the party just won two seats one Mehsana in Gujarat, Dr AK Patel and second Andhra Pradesh Chandupatla Janga Reddy, but in 2014 Narendera Modi led BJP won 282 seats making history and the congress continue declined since 1984, when it won 404 seats in Lok Sabha and after thirty years it reached only 44 seats. It was also the time when Indira Gandhi was assassinated and the congress converted sympathy into many voters[16]. Continuous decline of the congress is the threat of Indian democracy and political stability.

II.   CONCLUSION

Politics of India works within the framework of the country's constitution. India is a parliamentary democratic republic in which the president of India is the head of state and the Prime Minister of India is also head of the government. India followings the dual polity system i.e. federal in nature, that consists of the central authority at the centre and states at the periphery. There are 543 members in the Lok Sabha, who are elected using plurality voting (first past the post) system from 543 single-member constituencies. There are 245 members in the Rajya Sabha. India had its first general election in 1951 which was won by Indian National Congress, a political party that went on to dominate subsequent elections until 1977, when a non-congress government was formed for the first time in independent India. The 1990s saw the end of single party domination and the rise of coalition governments. The elections for the 16th Lok Sabha, held from April 2014 to May 2014, once again brought back single-party rule in the country with the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) being able to claim a majority in the Lok Saha. This election dealt the congress an electoral punch that knocked the wind out of its saits. It also threw up a leader in Narandra Modi that was reminiscent of Indira Gandhi with a larger than life image and that resulted in a tectonic shift of political equilibrium in Delhi form the middle of the centre ideological pinning of the congress to the right wing brand of politics of the BJP which rolled out a new political discourse promising to usher in a new India free from the congress. On the other hand, the BJP has extended its political reach and rules in 17 states either on its own or in alliance. The electoral map of India has turned almost saffron signalling the rise of the BJP as a dominant player in the country's politics.

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